NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 7, 2006

BENTON RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG CONSPIRACY

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, today announced the plea of guilty to an indictment for conspiracy to manufacture and possess with intent to distribute over 500 grams of methamphetamine in Franklin and Williamson Counties, in the Southern District of Illinois. The plea took place in United States District Court at Benton, Illinois, on Septetmber 7, 2006.

Daphne Braden, age 25, of Benton, Illinois entered a plea of guilty to one count of an indictment returned against which alleged her involvement in a conspiracy to manufacture and possess with intent to distribute over 500 grams of a mixture and substance containing methamphetamine between November 2003 and May 2005. She faces a potential sentence of life imprisonment, a $4 million dollar fine, and at least 5 years of supervised release.

At the hearing on her change of plea, the defendant admitted to being involved in a conspiracy, primarily in Franklin County, Illinois, which involved making more than 15 kilograms of methamphetamine for use and distribution to other coconspirators. According to the factual basis, the defendant was responsible for obtaining and then supplying pseudoephedrine pills which were then used by her coconspirators to manufacture methamphetamine. The investigation determined that she supplied pseudoephedrine pills on over 50 occasions to members of the conspiracy for use in manufacturing methamphetamine.

Investigation into the case was handled by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, the Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, the COMIT-Drug Task Force and by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael C. Carr.